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Travelling pattern: a Qur'ānic illumination and its secular source

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The study of Qur'āns produced in Iran and India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is beset with difficulties, some of which are exemplified by the particular case to be considered here. They derive from the fact that this is a period for which scholarship on Qur'āns is decidedly patchy: relatively few have been published, and studies on Persian art often take no account of Qur'ānic material. Nevertheless, attempts have been made in recent years to publish more material,[1] not just reproducing highly illuminated opening pages but also average text pages. Through such fuller representation we may hope to gain insight above all into the range of types of script, thereby advancing the wider study of the evolution of calligraphy. But there are also other aspects to be considered, for example the spatial disposition of commentaries relative to the main text, a potential source of information on the development of production, or the characteristics of the more routine illumination employed after the opening pages which might provide important clues for ascertaining date and provenance.

A further topic that may be opened up by the publication of more samples of Qur'ānic material from this period is the hitherto poorly studied relationship between illumination in Qur'āns and in secular manuscripts. It is true that they exhibit different profiles with regard to composition and calligraphic preferences, yet when we turn to illumination the parallels and similarities are sufficiently strong to justify an integrated approach, especially when we have documented cases of illuminators, such as the mid-sixteenth-century Safavid Rūzbihān al-Shīrāzī, who worked on both religious and secular manuscripts.[2]

An interesting and at the same time rather unusual illustration of the relationship between illumination in Qur'āns and secular manuscripts is presented by a late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century Qur'ān in the Chester Beatty Library (Is 1550) (figs 11.1 and 11.2 on colour plate V).[3] This shows a most striking feature: the use of geometric and decorative patterning in the illumination of the two double spreads at the beginning which harks back to early fifteenth-century Timurid models. The generic relationship has already been noted by James,[4] but not the fact that it is possible to identify a specific source, and one which is, moreover, secular; for the illumination in the Qur'ān is almost identical to that in a spectacular *Shāhnāma* made in Shiraz in *c.*1430 for the Timurid ruler Ibrāhīm Sulṭān Ibn Shāh Rukh and now in the Bodleian Library in Oxford (Ouseley Add. 176) (figs 11.3 and 11.4 on colour plate VI).[5]

The manuscripts

The Chester Beatty Library Qur'ān is complete, with 392 folios. There are eleven lines to the page, which measures 31 × 18.5 cm, while the text block measures 21 × 11.3 cm. The Qur'ānic text is set within a single block. Except for the *sūra* headings, which are in *thuluth*, a very fine *naskh* is used throughout, the text block is framed by multiple rulings in green, gold and red, while in the margins there is a Persian commentary in elegant *nasta'līq*, arranged in zig-zag lines forming square blocks (fig. 11.5). Typological predecessors for this type of arrangement may be found in Qur'āns of the Mamluk period, as a Qur'ān in the National Museum in Damascus demonstrates,[6] and the resulting contrast, which presumably has aesthetic implications, will be encountered with increasing frequency in Persian and Indian Qur'āns of the eighteenth and ninenteenth centuries. As for secular

manuscripts, from the Timurids onwards it is often the case that a *nasta'līq* text is found in the margins, around either a miniature or a text, its lines again arranged in zig-zag formation.[7]

The calligrapher of the Qur'ān's commentary, the *Mawāhib-i 'Aliyya* by Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn Ibn 'Alī Kāshifī (died 910/1504–5)[8] identifies himself in its colophon (fol. 389r, Fig. 11.6) as Dust Muḥammad Ibn Shaykh Gadā'ī, pupil of the late Mīrzā Abu Mīrzā Muḥammad Naṣīr (or, possibly, Nuṣayr). Neither Gadā'ī nor his teacher seem to be recorded, and no information can be gleaned from the Qur'ānic text, which lacks a colophon. There are, further, no seals in the manuscript.

For the date and place of production it is therefore to the script and illumination that we must turn. But the stylistic affiliations of the *naskh* used are difficult to determine with precision. The closest similarity appears to be with a type of *naskh* which is already found in Persian Qur'āns of the fifteenth century and was to continue down to the seventeenth and even eighteenth century, and can even be related to the school of the great calligrapher Mīrzā Aḥmad Nayrīzī. The illumination, however, may prove more helpful, for if we set apart the four illuminated folios at the beginning of the manuscript (fols 1v–2r and 2v–3r, figs 11.1 and 11.2: see colour plate V) its vocabulary largely conforms to that of late sixteenth to early seventeenth-century Persian Qur'āns. To be noted, however, is that it contains elements also found in Qur'āns produced in India, and that among published Qur'āns it is in one by a Shīrāzī scribe, probably produced in India, that we find the closest calligraphic match.

Apart from the four folios at the beginning, illumination occurs in the *sūra* headings, which are in *thuluth* script (fig. 11.6); in the marginal polylobed medallions giving the *juz'* and *ḥizb* divisions, written in a large *thuluth* (fig. 11.7); and in the initial verse of the next division, as, for example, on fol. 161v (fig. 11.7). All have a gold background filled with arabesques of multicoloured flowers, and different colours are also used for the writing of the *sūra* headings and *juz'* and *ḥizb* indications, including orange, acid green, white, red and blue (with gold being reserved for the initial *basmala* of each *sūra*).

The second manuscript, the Bodleian *Shāhnāma* on which the illumination of fols 1v–2r and 2v–3r in the Qur'ān is modelled, has 469 folios. It has been unbound, with the illuminated and illustrated pages individually mounted under glass and separated from the remaining text block. The average measurements of the reconstructed page (margins have been restored in some points) are 28.8 × 19.6 cm, while the text block measures 22 × 15 cm. The manuscript contains forty-seven miniatures, some of which have been retouched.[9] There are various illuminated pages: a head piece on fol. 11v with the *basmala* and beginning of the text; the illuminated dedication, a star pattern, on fol. 12r; and three double-spread illuminations, the first, on fols 16v–17r, with full page illuminations above and below which are cartouches containing a dedication, the identity of the illuminator being inserted in the frames (fol. 16v *dhahhabahu* + fol. 17r *Naṣr al-Sulṭānī*), the second, on fols 17v–18r, and the third, on fols 237v–238r, both with illumination surrounding the text on each page.

The manuscript has no colophon, but a dedication to Ibrāhīm Sulṭān Ibn Shāh Rukh (r. 807–850/1405–47) is found on fol. 12r in a rosette surrounded by a lavish, sunburst illumination (fig. 11.8).

Relationship

Comparison between the double spread on fols 1v–2r and 2v–3r of the Qur'ān (figs 11.1 and 11.2 on colour plate V) and the double spread on fols 16v–17r and 17v–18r of the *Shāhnāma* (figs 11.3 and 11.4 on colour plate VI) shows that there is a close similarity both in the geometric organization of the space and in the repertoire of decorative elements deployed. The illumination of the dedication on fol. 12r of the *Shāhnāma* also contains elements that can be compared to fols 1v–2r of the Qur'ān (fig. 11.8).

The layout of Qur'ān 1v–2r and *Shāhnāma* 16v–17r has a central block on each page containing the first *sūra* in the Qur'ān and geometrical and floral illumination (without any text) in the *Shāhnāma*. In the Qur'ān this block is surrounded by multiple frames, each with different decorative motifs of chainwork and flower arrangements of different colours on different backgrounds. In the *Shāhnāma* there is one frame with flowers on black. In both manuscripts these are surrounded in turn by the main rectangular frame, formed by flower

compositions that meet in the middle of each side with a roundel containing a geometric device. Above and below are panels containing the *sūra* title and verse count in orange *thuluth* in the Qur'ān and a verse panegyric for Ibrāhīm Sulṭān in large gold *thuluth* in the *Shāhnāma*. The whole is ruled by a gold frame. The outer border is formed by spiked semi-oval devices between each of which is an indentation in the same manner as not only *Shāhnāma* fol. 16v–17r but also 12r.

On Qur'ān 2v–3r and *Shāhnāma* 17v–18r the text is in a rectangular panel, in black *naskh* in the Qur'ān and in black *nasta'līq* arranged in two columns in the *Shāhnāma*. In the Qur'ān, the text is over flower scrolls on gold, and the panel is bordered by gold strap work, flower chains and coloured bands, while in the *Shāhnāma* the text is in clouds on the bare paper, and is only surrounded by a gold frame. However, in both manuscripts there are panels at each side with multiple palmettes on a blue ground surrounded by flower chains on black, while above and below there are panels, surrounded by gold strapwork, at each end of which there is a peculiar motif of three linked circles with a central rosette and white palmettes on a blue ground. The remainder of each panel has full and half palmettes and arabesque scrolls surrounding a central cartouche which contains the *sūra* title and verse count in orange *thuluth* on gold in the Qur'ān and verses in white kufic on blue in the *Shāhnāma*. Also common to both manuscripts is an outer border of alternating palmettes in various colours.

Given the presence of so many parallels, which range from layout to specifics of design, it is difficult to reach any other conclusion than that the illumination of these initial folios of the Qur'ān derives directly from the Bodleian *Shāhnāma*. But if we accept that the illuminator of the Qur'ān must have had access to the Bodleian *Shāhnāma*, the question still remains of where and when this took place, and what the motive might have been for such archaizing stylistic borrowing.

Date

A particularly intriguing aspect of the Chester Beatty Qur'ān is in fact the difficulty of reaching a secure conclusion as to its place of production, for the nature of the stylistic and documentary evidence points variously towards both Persia and India. But we may begin with its date, which is rather less problematic, for if the exact year is unknown it can at least be assigned with some confidence to a precise period. Both Arberry, in 1967, and James, in 1980, have attributed it to Safavid Persia and dated it to the seventeenth century.[10] The reasons given for a seventeenth century date were that it lacks the tripartite division of the page typical of the sixteenth century, and that the Timurid style of the initial illumination can be associated with the patronage of Shah 'Abbās I.[11] However, we cannot regard the first criterion as crucial, as there are enough examples without the tripartite division of the page already being produced before the end of the sixteenth century,[12] and the second is also problematic, for reasons that will be discussed at greater length below.

On the other hand, it is certainly the case that within the colour range of the illumination the traditional blue and gold of the early Safavid period (up to about the mid-sixteenth century) are replaced by, or used together with, greens (and in particular the much-loved acid green), oranges, purples and burgundy, a palette which has affinities with that of seventeenth-century secular Safavid painting. Again, in place of the more rigorously geometric arrangement of the multicoloured flower arabesques of the earlier period we have a freer and more flowing arrangement which is, further, set against predominantly golden backgrounds rather than the typical earlier blue. It is true that writing on gold with floral arabesques is already attested in Shīrāzī Qur'āns of the mid-sixteenth century (and, sporadically, even earlier)[13] but it becomes more typical of late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Qur'āns.[14] Given that the Chester Beatty Qur'ān lacks the palette and the more elaborate features typical of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century, these features, taken together, suggest that it should be dated to between the late sixteenth century and the early seventeenth.

The so-called 'Timurid revival'

Because of its relationship to Timurid illumination, David James suggested that what he and Arberry took to be a seventeenth-century Safavid Qur'ān could be set in the context of what has been termed

a 'Timurid revival' associated with the reign, and patronage, of Shah ʿAbbās I (996–1038/1588–1629). The many Timurid painters and calligraphers who eventually worked for the Safavids, not to mention the Safavid artists trained by those masters, ensured a strong and enduring Timurid presence in Safavid art, while the Timurid legacy was also transmitted through numerous surviving manuscripts, drawings and sketches: the Safavids acquired Timurid plunder during the 1510 conquest of Herat as well as finding in Tabriz plentiful booty from earlier Turkman occupations of the Timurid capital. It is, therefore, hardly surprising to find Timurid influences present not only throughout the sixteenth century[15] but also enduring well into the seventeenth. At the same time, it is incontestable that Safavid art evolved away from Timurid norms during the course of the sixteenth century, so that the reversal to explicitly Timurid features at the end of the century or early in the next cannot be explained in terms of continuity, but must result from a deliberate harking back. What is at issue is the underlying motivation for this move, and the widely accepted concept of a 'Timurid revival' is essentially an interpretation: it implies that during the reign of Shah ʿAbbās I royal patronage was marked by a conscious historicism which may in turn be seen as the expression of an ideological programme legitimizing the Safavids as inheritors of the Timurid mantle.

But the evidence is at best circumstantial, so that the case rests on inference from various works of the period that exhibit or are presumed to exhibit Timurid features. It is generally said that there is a Timurid revival in architecture,[16] but the claim is difficult to substantiate, as there is no building of the period of Shah ʿAbbās I or, indeed, of the Safavid period in general, that is clearly modelled on Timurid architecture, and the Timurid features that one may recognize in certain buildings may be best interpreted in terms of continuity.[17] For relevant material it is thus to the visual arts that we need to turn, even if considerable interpretative problems remain.

There are, for example, an album and two detached drawings of warriors in Timurid/Turkman garb, probably produced between the mid-sixteenth and the early seventeenth century,[18] and even more striking are the drawings of Riżā-yi ʿAbbāsi after Bihzād, executed between the 1610s and the 1620s.[19] But it is not known whether these works were commissioned, and if so by whom, so that what they demonstrate is unclear. There is, on the other hand, a set of miniatures that for a long time was thought to be prepared for Shah ʿAbbās I in 1614. They are in the Spencer *Shāhnāma* in the New York Public Library, copied in the style of the famous *Shāhnāma* produced for the Timurid prince Baysunghur in 833/1430 in Herat which is now in the Gulistan Palace Library in Teheran.[20] But these miniatures can no longer be adduced as evidence for a 'Timurid revival', for they are now considered, in the light of recent analyses, to be nineteenth-century copies.[21]

There remains, then, the case of the 888/1483 *Manṭiq al-ṭayr*, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.[22] Some time before 1609, the year the manuscript was donated by Shah ʿAbbās I to the Ardabil shrine, it was remounted and rebound, and to the four Timurid miniatures it contained four new paintings and illuminations were added in the empty spaces left in the incomplete original. There is little doubt that the work was commissioned by Shah ʿAbbās I, but there is nothing in these additional paintings to suggest that they represent a conscious historicism: they are stylistically complex, but although Timurid elements are obviously present, these are outweighed by others that are undoubtedly Safavid. In short, although there are undoubtedly a number of pieces from this period that do expressly revert to Timurid styles, it is by no means demonstrable that they reflect the desires of a particular patron; and there is in any case no hard evidence that Shah ʿAbbās I promoted a particular artistic policy for political, ideological or propagandistic reasons.[23]

Provenance

Nor is it the case that the reappearance of Timurid features in a late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century manuscript necessarily implies a link with the Safavids. One might equally point to the Mughals, for in addition to the clear genealogical link to their Timurid forbears, there is ample evidence of the symbolic importance they attached to the cultural reaffirmation of their Central Asian past.[24] But what is of interest in the present case is

not so much the concern of the Mughals with the Timurid inheritance, whether in painting, architecture or music, as the connections between the Safavids and the Shi'i dynasties of the Deccan, and in particular the Quṭbshāhīs of Golconda, for if the Qur'ān is of Indian rather than Persian provenance, Golconda would seem a likely location.

Yet another possibility to be considered is Central Asia, for before Herat was captured by the Safavids it had been held, even if briefly, by the Shaybanid Uzbeks of Transoxiana, eager promoters of Timurid culture who ruled in Bukhara until 1007/1598. There is a conceivable connection in the form of a seal impression in the Bodleian *Shāhnāma* which, as Alexander Morton has suggested, could well be sixteenth-century Shaybanid,[25] and it may also not be irrelevant to note that the commentary that surrounds our Qur'ān was originally written for Mīr 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī, whom the Uzbeks held in high regard. Nevertheless, more tangible evidence is lacking, and given our extremely scanty knowledge of Qur'ānic production in Transoxiana during this period [26] a Central Asian provenance must be regarded as no more than a hypothetical possibility, and will not be considered further.

For the Safavids, Timurid manuscripts, whether illustrated or not, continued to be valued objects in the early seventeenth century, and the *Manṭiq al-tayr* was by no means the only one to be donated by Shah 'Abbās I as a *vaqf* (endowment) to the dynastic shrine at Ardabil. This would suggest as a more than plausible scenario that the Bodleian *Shāhnāma*, whether or not temporarily a Shaybanid possession, eventually passed into Safavid hands and was used as a prestigious stylistic model by an unknown Safavid illuminator who, in the Chester Beatty Qur'ān, combined major display features taken from the *Shāhnāma* with more traditional Safavid elements.

If the design elements are taken in conjunction with the script, the Qur'ān can be securely placed within a Shīrāzī tradition that straddles the Timurid and Safavid periods. But it does not necessarily follow from this that it is itself Safavid. The evidence of the calligraphic character of the text is inconclusive, for there are exponents of the Shīrāzī school who were active in India, and in the present state of our knowledge it would be sensible not to attempt to distinguish between a Persian or Indian origin on the basis of calligraphy alone but to consider it in conjunction with illumination, and here one may note as a potentially more significant indicator the presence of features that tend to be more characteristic of Indian than of Safavid Qur'āns.

Specifically, these are the use of a rectangular frame to surround not just the illumination of the *sūra* headings but also the initial verses (as, for example, on fol. 161v), and the inclusion of the letter *'ain* (an abbreviation of *'ashr*) together with the other indications of verse divisions. The latter, indeed, has been regarded as a typically Indian practice.[27] Also, one may notice that in the opening two pages the illumination reproduces its *Shāhnāma* prototype almost exactly, but that the space occupied by the text is much smaller, the intervening area being filled by multiple frames. Those in double spread 1v–2r are stylistically fascinating in the way they consist of a double repetition of elements taken from the prototype but then leave the area immediately surrounding the text to be filled with a contrasting design utilizing a later idiom both in its palette and its decorative vocabulary. This same decorative vocabulary is encountered in an Indian Qur'ān in the Khalili Collection (Qur216), produced in Golconda at the beginning of the eighteenth century, discussed below.

As the Chester Beatty Qur'ān is undocumented, it is only from the *Shāhnāma* that supplementary clues might be gathered, including, possibly, some indication as to the crucial issue of its whereabouts at the time it was used as the source for the two double-spread illuminations. Of possible relevance here is the presence, at the left bottom of the dedication page (fol. 12r), of a dated inspection note that reads *'arḍ 30 rajab al-murajjab sanat 1003* 'inspected on 30 Rajab 1003 (10 April 1595)' (fig. 11.8). It is written in a hasty and rather large *nasta'līq* on a rectangular piece of paper pasted, as part of the restoration, into the lower left corner of the damaged original page. On epigraphic grounds, and considering the quality of the paper, the inscription may be considered genuine, and since inspection notes are common in manuscripts that belonged to the Mughal royal library,[28] it suggests that the *Shāhnāma* may have been in India when it being used as a model by the illuminator of the Qur'ān. To this may be added the further possible Indian connection represented by the retouching of the

faces in some of the miniatures of the *Shāhnāma* done, according to Robinson, by Indian 'restorers'.

Nevertheless, what appears here to be interesting circumstantial evidence becomes rather less convincing on closer inspection. The retouchings, for example, were most probably done in the nineteenth century, and although they could very well be Indian, the rather limited stylistic clues they provide point just as readily to a late Qajar style. In any case, from the presence of the manuscript in India in the nineteenth century it would not necessarily follow that it had been there since the early seventeenth: we know, for instance, that manuscripts passed into the Mughal library at various stages during the eighteenth century, as a Safavid Qur'ān in the Chester Beatty Library demonstrates.[29]

Equally problematic is the 1003/1595 inspection note, for consideration of its nature rather than simply the fact of its presence suggests that it is not typically Mughal. Most of the Akbari ones that John Seyller has studied use a different formula and give a regnal rather than a *Hijra* date, as on the *Shāhnāma*,[30] and the practice of giving the regnal date and the associated formula was certainly well established by 1003/1595.[31] There are, however, two manuscripts that have the same inspection formula as the *Shāhnāma*.[32] They are, moreover, from the same year, appear in exactly the same location, on the *shamsa* folio, are even written at the same angle, and seem to be in the same hand as that in the Bodleian *Shāhnāma*. It is therefore likely that all three were done by the same librarian in the same library. The other two contain rupee price indications, but these are separate additions and could date from much later, so that we still have no way of identifying the library in question, except to say that as the formula used differs from that found in Akbari inspection notes, the probability is that it was not the Mughal royal library. But precisely the same argument could be used against the obvious alternative, the Safavid royal library, for Safavid inspection notes, in any case far fewer (or, perhaps, less studied), again use a different formula.[33]

We are thus left little the wiser. But if the provenance of the Chester Beatty Qur'ān remains an interesting if unresolved problem, it may at least be suggested that the articulation of the debate in terms of a straightforward Persia versus India dichotomy is, in cultural terms, somewhat artificial, as the employment of Iranian scribes in India shows. Of particular relevance here are two Qur'āns in the Khalili Collection. One, datable to the late sixteenth century, was written by ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Ḥusayni, a native of Shiraz who emigrated to India to work for the Quṭbshāhī Sulṭāns of Golconda (918–1098/1512–1687)[34] at the end of the sixteenth century, and it may therefore have been produced there.[35] It is this particular Qur'ān that exhibits strong calligraphic similarities to our Chester Beatty one. It makes of the *ʿain* an even more prominent feature, but resembles it closely in its use of rectangular panels surrounding the *sūra* headings. The illumination is, in fact, typical of late sixteenth-century Iran, and bears some similarities to that of the Chester Beatty Qur'ān, for example in the use of gold on which the text of the opening *sūra* and *sūra* headings is used. When David James published it he put in his entry 'Iran or India, 1575–1600', reflecting how difficult it is to give a precise attribution to material of this type. Since then, analysis of the paper has shown it to be Indian,[36] and although Indian paper was also used outside India this may be thought to strengthen the case for an Indian attribution.

The other Qur'ān is signed by a Muḥammad ʿArab, possibly therefore Mullā Muḥammad ʿArab Shīrāzī, another scribe of Shīrāzī origin who emigrated to India and worked for the Quṭbshāhīs of Golconda in the 1620s–30s, and in this case the evidence for an Indian provenance is extremely strong.[37] Accordingly, attention may be drawn to the parallel use, on fols. 3v–4r, where the frame immediately preceding the text is of flower arrangements of gold clouds on blue, as in the Chester Beatty Qur'ān fols. 1v–2r. In both manuscripts those texts are on gold filled with flowers, although in the Khalili Qur'ān these are on thin tree branches.

In all three manuscripts, Chester Beatty and the two Khalili ones, the type of *naskh* employed can be traced back to fifteenth-century Iran, as another example in the Khalili collection demonstrates.[38] This fifteenth-century Qur'ān has many calligraphic characteristics in common with the other two and likewise with the Chester Beatty Qur'ān, prominent among them a general elegance and clarity, while more specifically one may point to a preference for a very elongated and oval final *yā'* and *nūn*. One may also note in *al-fātiḥa* an exagger-

atedly high peak between the *yā'* and *mīm* of *mustaqīm* or *al-rahīm* in both the Chester Beatty and the Khalili 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥusaynī Qur'ān. Elements such as a ligature between *rā'* and a following *tā' marbūṭa* are avoided, and they also avoid strict adherence to a uniformly horizontal setting of the text found in Indian Qur'āns, allowing a slight downward slope, with the final letter of the word resting on the horizontal line. To be noted, further, in the Chester Beatty Qur'ān, is the horizontal line of the vowel marks, which are all at the same height, a characteristic also displayed in a Safavid Qur'ān in the British Library (Or. 13087) which was produced in Herat in 970/1563.[39]

The *naskh* of the Chester Beatty Qur'ān can thus be traced in Persian Qur'āns from at least the fifteenth century up to at least the seventeenth century. It is also rather close in style to certain examples by Mīrzā Aḥmad Nayrīzī, the great Persian champion of *naskh* who was active in Isfahan from 1682 to possibly 1740[40] and who was imitated well into the nineteenth century.[41] As demonstrated by a Qur'ān in the Chester Beatty Library which bears his signature,[42] there are marked similarities in the general clarity of the script, the wide spacing of the lines of text and the almost identical height at which the vowels are drawn.

All this reinforces the assumption of a coherent and sustained development of calligraphic norms in Safavid Persia, with Shiraz, Herat and Isfahan as the main foci of scribal activity. Equally, we know that after the Timurids Shiraz continued to be an important centre of manuscript production, including illumination, not only during the Safavid period but also under the Qajars,[43] and in addition to the two double spreads derived from the Timurid *Shāhnāma* the remaining illumination of the Chester Beatty Qur'ān is also very much in a Shīrāzī style. Its immediate antecedents are to be found in sixteenth-century Safavid Qur'āns such as the Chester Beatty Qur'ān by Rūzbihān al-Shīrāzī already mentioned and that in the British Library (Or. 13087) dated 1563, and later examples of the same style are found in the seventeenth century in Persia, as is confirmed by another Safavid Qur'ān in the British Library (Or. 13371),[44] which again exhibits the typical acid green and brilliant orange and purple. It contains, further, marginal polylobed medallions, for example on fols 220r and 301r, which are similar to those in the Chester Beatty Qur'ān and represent a type also found in illumination of the Timurid period, as, although on a different scale, in the frontispiece of a *Kalīla va Dimna* copied for Baysunghur Ibn Shāhrukh in Herat and dated Muḥarram 833/October 1429.[45]

But equally typical of late sixteenth-century Shīrāzī style is the illumination in the two Qur'āns in the Khalili collection that may be by Persian scribes working in Golconda. Indeed, the one that is characterized by clearly Indian elements (Qur216) juxtaposes with them features that can be traced back to fifteenth-century Timurid Shiraz,[46] in particular the illumination of the central, rectangular area surrounding the opening of the Qur'ān on fols 4v–5r. This indicates that just as scribes trained in Persia found patronage at courts in India, some of the illuminators who collaborated with them there were either themselves trained in, or were at least familiar with, the Shīrāzī tradition.

The Timurid elements in the Chester Beatty Qur'ān are most probably not a product of the conscious artistic policy of a patron but more simply a reflection of the riches of a library that might provide inspiration to an artist commissioned to produce a sumptuously illuminated Qur'ān. The discovery of their exact source, the Ibrāhīm Sulṭān *Shāhnāma*, perhaps points to an aesthetic relationship with the past analogous to that between the drawings of Riżā-yi 'Abbāsi and their Bihzād originals, and suggests that in some contexts there may have been no difference between how traditions of figural painting and illumination were read.

NOTES

1 See, for example, the series of catalogues on Qur'ānic material from the Khalili collection: Déroche 1989; James 1992a; James 1992b; Bayani, Contadini and Stanley 1999, and see also Quaritch 1991 and 1999 and Munich 1998.

2 His activity as an illuminator is attested by his signature to the illumination of at least three and possibly four manuscripts. Two are secular: an illustrated three-volume copy of the *Kulliyāt* of Sa'dī, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Fraser 73 (Robinson 1958, 90), and an illustrated copy of the *Dīvān* of Amīr Khusrau, Berlin, Islamisches Museum, Ms. 16016, dated 920/1514. The third is a copy of the Qur'ān in Tehran, Iran Bastan Museum, dated 930/1524 (Bayani 1345–58/1966–79, no. 79), and the fourth another in Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Is 1558. In this last the colophon clearly states that Rūzbihān was the scribe, and its phraseology (*taqaddama bi-tarqīmihi*)

led James (1992b, 148) to think that he was also the illuminator. The complete text (fol. 445r) is: *qad tasharrafa bi-taḥrīrihi wa taqaddama bi-tarqīmihi al-faqīr ilā Allāh al-aḥad al-ghanī aqall al-duʿafāʾ wa aḍʿaf al-fuqarāʾ Rūzbihān Muḥammad al-ṭabʿī al-Shīrāzī ḥasharahu Allāh fī ḥizb al-nabī al-hāshimī Muḥammad al-makkī al-qurashī*, 'the servant of Allāh the one bountiful God who was honoured to undertake its compilation and illumination (?) is the least of the weak and the weakest of the poor, Rūzbihān Muḥammad al-Ṭabʿi al-Shīrāzī, may God gather him among the party of the hashimite Prophet, Muḥammad the Qurashite Meccan'. However, the interpretation of the expression *qad tasharrafa bi-taḥrīrihi wa taqaddama bi-tarqīmihi* is subject to debate, as it might be an example of hendiadys. For a fuller account of Rūzbihān see James 1992b, 144–9.

3 Is 1550: see Arberry 1967, 53, no. 174, col. pl. 9; James 1980, 85, no. 66. Exhibited in Princeton 1967. I began to study this Qur'ān while Curator of the Islamic Collections of the Chester Beatty Library. I should like to thank Elaine Wright, the present Curator, who provided further information about the manuscript, and Doris Nicholson of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, who facilitated study of the Oxford *Shāhnāma* and organized the photographic material. I am likewise grateful to Alexander Morton, who suggested an interpretation of the seal and of the inspection note in the *Shāhnāma*, and to John Seyller, who provided valuable information related to the inspection note in the *Shāhnāma*, and spent time discussing aspects of the relationship between Mughal and Safavid manuscripts. Sheila Canby, ʿAbdullāh Gouchanī and Tim Stanley were kind enough to discuss and provide me with helpful suggestions, while Robert Skelton, Robert Hillenbrand, Sussan Babaie, Eleanor Sims, Ernst Grube and Manijeh Bayani all spent time discussing specific problems with me. I should like to thank them all and, finally, Michael Rogers, to whom I am particularly grateful for having read a draft of this article with his customarily sharp eye.

4 See James 1980, 85, cat. no. 66.

5 Sachau and Ethé 1889–1930, I, 452, no. 501; Robinson 1958, 16. This manuscript is also briefly discussed in Pinder-Wilson 1958, 4–5.

6 Damascus, National Museum, A. 13615, datable to the fourteenth century, where the commentary is, obviously, not in *nastaʿlīq* script, but is arranged around the margins in zig-zag lines: see Al-ʿUsh 1976, 225 and fig. 129.

7 See, for example, a poetic compilation dated 1417 in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Suppl. persan 1469 and, for a later example, another poetic text also in the Biliothèque Nationale, Suppl. persan 1309 datable to around 1575: Richard 1997, col. pl. opposite p. 59 and p. 198, no. 136 respectively.

8 See Yousofi 1978. The *Mawāhib-i ʿAliyya* is a short commentary on the Qur'ān that Kāshifī composed in 897–9/1491–4 and dedicated to ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī.

9 Robinson 1958, 16.

10 Arberry 1967, 53, cat. no. 174; James 1980, 85, cat. no. 66.

11 James 1980, 76 and 85, cat. no. 66.

12 See, for example, in the Khalili collection Qur3, Herat 1559–60, and Qur292, Iran, *c.*1525–50: James 1992b, 118, cat no. 32 and 142, cat. no. 38 respectively.

13 See, for examples, two Qur'āns by Rūzbihān al-Shīrāzī: Khalili Collection, Qur111 and Qur60: James 1992b, 150, cat. no. 39, Shiraz 952/1545–6; and 158, cat. no. 40, Shiraz *c.*1550.

14 In the Khalili collection: Qur729 and Qur422. See James 1992b, 172, cat. no. 43, Shiraz or Qazvin 959/1552; 184, cat. no. 45, Shiraz 972/1564–5, written by Ḥusayn al-Fakhkhār al-Shīrāzī. See also a seventeenth-century Qur'ān in Boston, Museum of Fine Arts: Welch 1973, 136, no. 88.

15 As examples of Timurid style in the sixteenth century may be cited a Shah Ismāʿīl jade jug (probably a Timurid jug to which the name of the Safavid ruler was added), now in Istanbul, Topkapı Saray Museum, no. 22 1844: Lentz and Lowry 1989, fig. 102; a series of metal, inlaid jugs, for which see Komaroff 1979–80; the Timurid copy of the *Mathnavī* of Rūmī copied by the famous calligrapher Sulṭān ʿAlī Mashhadī and fitted with a Safavid frontispiece, Vever collection, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, S.86.0035; a copy of *Gūy u chaugān* (931/1524–5), a mystical poem by ʿĀrifī, which was made by Shah Ṭahmāsp and presented to his vizier, with eighteen miniatures that imitate the work of Bihzād, State Public Library, St Petersburg, Dorn 441, Ardabil collection: Dickson and Welch 1981, I, 34 and footnote 13.

16 See, for example, Welch 1974, 484 and Welch 1973, 65, no. 14, where it is stated that one of the most prominent examples of Shah ʿAbbās I's inclination toward Timurid models is the Royal Mosque (Masjid-i Imām) at Isfahan (1612–1638). However, the few elements that can be traced back to Timurid architecture may simply represent a continuation, and there is no clear sign of a Timurid revival: see Hillenbrand 1986, 829.

17 See Hillenbrand 1986, esp. 829.

18 Of the two detached paintings one is in Los Angeles, County Museum of Art, M. 73.5.24: see Pal 1973, 105, no. 191, which shows very clear early seventeenth-century Safavid characteristics, and one in the Sadruddin Aga Khan's collection, IR.M. 80, which was attributed by Grube to Herat, ca. 1425: Grube 1968, no. 25. It has recently been reattributed to Isfahan, *c.*1615 by Canby 1998, no. 46, following Welch, and put in the context of a Timurid revival under Shah ʿAbbās I. The figure is on a piece of paper that has been pasted onto a frame containing four lines of text (two on top and two at bottom) which, judging from the calligraphic style, could, instead, very well be Timurid. It has not yet been possible to translate this text which, according to Robert Skelton (private communication), is in an Indic language. The album is in the Malik Library in Tehran and has eight portraits of Turkman/Kashgar princes who lived between the late fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century. The pictures, according to Emel Esin, are to be ascribed to a provincial atelier of the mid-sixteenth century, but hark back to Timurid style: Esin 1973. They are similar to the detached painting in Sadruddin Aga Khan's collection mentioned above. I should like to thank Ernst Grube, who drew my attention to this album.

19 See Canby 1996, 129–36.

20 Firdausī's *Shāhnāma* dated 1023/1614, New York Public Library, Spencer, Pers. ms. 2: Grube 1962a, no. 105; Grube 1964; Welch 1973, 65, no. 14.

21 Schmitz 1992, 54 and 105–6, cat. no. II.12.

22 See Grube 1967. I am grateful to M.L. Swietochowski for her help while I was studying the manuscript at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in April 2001.

23 Welch (1974, 484) concludes his discussion on the various elements of a Timurid revival as follows: 'Whatever the reasons for this Timurid revival, it was short-lived. Aside from these two great manuscripts [the Spencer *Shāhnāma*, now known to be nineteenth century, and the *Manṭiq al-ṭayr*] and a few scattered miniatures, it left no traces, and its influence in shaping the "Isfahan" style appears to have been nil.' However, it may be added that Quinn 2000, 90–91 concludes that during the reign of Shah ʿAbbās there was a shift in historiographical writing to give greater prominence to Safavid connections with Timur as a legitimizing strategy.

24 See Lentz and Lowry 1989, 319–24. Also articles by L. Leach, 'The Timurids as a Symbol for Emperor Jahangir'; P. Vaughan, 'Begams of the House of Timur and the Dynastic Image'; and A. Kumar Das, 'Persian Masterworks and Their Transformation in Jahangir's Taswirkhana', in Canby 1994, 81–96, 117–34, 135–52 respectively. This argument has been used by Manijeh Bayani and Tim Stanley in a brief discussion of the Chester Beatty Qur'ān: see Manijeh Bayani and Tim Stanley 'Iran. The late Safavid renewal and Aḥmad Nayrīzī' in Bayani, Contadini and Stanley 1999, 125–130, at p. 125. They also claim that the *naskh* used is 'characteristically Indian'. However, the characteristics in question are not identified.

25 On fol. 468v. It reads as follows: *al-mutawakkil ʿalā al-malik al-mannān / aqall al-ʿibād ... dawlatkhān* ('He who puts his trust in the Bountiful Lord / the least of his servants ... Daulatkhān'). The crucial name is smudged, and it has not yet been possible to arrive at a satisfactory reading. The seal incorporates the Timurid calligraphic tradition and the division in two sections, but, at the same time, does not have the shape and size of a Timurid seal.

26 See Gray 1979. Also Richard 1997, 128–9.

27 See Gray 1979. Also Richard 1997, 128–9.

28 But this may simply be a perception that comes from the fact that the work of John Seyller on the inspection notes of the manuscripts of the Mughal library is not yet matched by a similar investigation of those of the Safavid library. See Seyller 1997.

29 Is 1547: see Arberry 1967, no. 163 and pl. 55; James 1980, no. 84; James 1981, no. 52. This sixteenth-century Safavid Qur'ān has seals of ownership of two eighteenth-century Mughal emperors, Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 1131–61/1719–48) and ʿĀlamgīr II (r. 1167–73/1754–60).

30 They usually start with *ʿarḍ dīdeh shud bi-tārīkh...* ('inspected and seen on the date ...') and the date is usually a regnal date, even if sometimes also followed by the *Hijra* one. See Seyller 1997, Appendix A, from p. 280.

31 There are at least twelve manuscripts with inspection notes dated 1003/1595 that use the typical Mughal formula: see Seyller 1997, 249, footnote 19.

32 One on a *Khamsa* of Niẓāmī in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Supp. Persan 575, Blochet 1905–34, III, no. 1694), illuminated, but unillustrated, with an inspection note that says *ʿarḍ 5 Jumādā I 1003* (16 January 1595); and the other in a *Majmūʿat al-makhṭūṭāt* in the Delhi National Museum (61.27), also illuminated but unillustrated, with an inspection note that says *ʿarḍ 27 Rabīʿ II 1003* (9 January 1595). See Seyller 1997, 320 and 325. I am grateful to John Seyller for providing me with photographic material related to the inspection note of the manuscript in Delhi.

33 See, for example, a copy of the *Dīvān* of Amīr Shāhī, copied by ʿAlī al-Mashhadī, Iran, *c.*1500, in which there are inspection notes from the Safavid royal library of various dates in the seventeenth century: Black and Saidi 2000, cat. no. 35. For a general survey of the *Kitāb-khāna* in Safavid Iran, see Simpson 1994, which does not, however, deal with this particular aspect.

34 For the Persian artistic presence in Golconda see Zebrowski 1983, 153–7.

35 Khalili collection, Qur248: see James 1992b, cat. no. 47. For ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Ḥusayni and two other Qur'āns signed by him in the Astān-i Quds Library in Mashhad see Maʿani 1347, cat. nos 89 and 88.

36 I am grateful to Tim Stanley for this piece of information.

37 Khalili collection, Qur216: see Bayani, Contadini and Stanley 1999, cat. no. 68. For the scribe and other works signed by him see Bayani 1345–58, II, 428–9, no. 595 and Welch 1985, 318, 319, no. 124.

38 Khalili collection, Qur123: see James 1992b, 70, cat. no. 18.

39 Lings and Safadi 1976, 79, no. 138.

40 For his last recorded work see Qur384 in the Khalili Collection: Bayani, Contadini and Stanley 1999, 164, cat. no. 54.

41 See Raby 1996, nos 161–3.

42 Chester Beatty Library, Is 1561, dated Safar 1125/March 1713: see Arberry 1967, no. 177, pl. 58; James 1980, no. 67.

43 See Robinson 1979a; also Soudavar 1992, p. 242.

44 The interlinear Persian translation of the British Library Qur'ān (13371) is dated 1141/1728 (fol. 327v), but the main text and the illumination are believed to have been done in the seventeenth century. See Lings and Safadi 1976, 82, no. 146.

45 Now in Istanbul, Topkapı Saray Library, R.1022, fols 2v–3r. See colour plates in Lentz and Lowry 1989, 82–3.

46 For another instance in which Shīrāzī illumination spread to India, but possibly at an earlier date, in the fifteenth century, see Wright 1996. For Shīrāzī miniature painting and its influence on Indian manuscripts see: A. S. Melikian Chirvani, 'L'Ecole de Shiraz et les origines de la miniature moghole' and D. Barrett, 'Painting at Bijapur' in Pinder-Wilson 1969, 124–41 and 142–59 respectively.

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